

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3876/03
by Francesco Fiori (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Exceeding of the basic cultivation areas for 2003 and application of penalties

With regard to the problems of maize production and the exceeding of the basic cultivation area for 2003, with the consequent application of penalties, and also in the light of the communication by Agea (Italy) on the expected 18.6% reduction in the CAP premium arising from the imposition of a ceiling on the area reserved for maize - even though Italy's maximum guaranteed area has not been exceeded - it is now essential, as a matter of urgency, to ask the Commission to rescind the (at all events exceptional) penalties.

The drought of 2003 has taken its toll in considerably higher production costs (as much as 32% higher than previous years), especially for irrigation, as well as in a marked fall in average production, serving to confirm the significant reduction in maize producers' incomes.

The situation of maize producers is already highly vulnerable, and could become disastrous if further unplanned events (classifiable as force majeure) occur to compound the effects of the expected 18.6% cut.

What action will the Commission take to restore equilibrium in the maize-producing areas?